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Serious Blow to Victoria

SUSPENSION of CPR boat service on the triangle run linking Victoria, Vancouver and Seattle from the end of February to the end of April, and permanent stopping of the Port Angeles and Victoria-Vancouver night ferries was announced without prior warning yesterday by the company. The word comes as a shock to this city, now in its winter convention season. It anticipates by a year any prospect of the gap being filled by provincial ferry or by other means. It will involve the removal of the Joan and Elizabeth from this port, cut the direct CPR boat link with Seattle, and leave Nanaimo as Victoria's chief means of ingress and egress during the shut-down. And the community has just three weeks' notice to get ready for that.

It has been common knowledge for some time that the CPR triangle run was operating at a deficit; that the night-class boats used on the winter run were not productive; and that in terms of outlay, passenger response had been indifferent. Also, through Nanaimo and its bus and daycoach services, it was known that the company considered that Victoria traffic was being amply served. All this time, however, the triangle service has been in operation, and freight, passengers, express and other traffic were being handled between the three cities concerned.

It was on the triangle run that this city built up its tourist trade, and while economic conditions have altered, a complete shutdown of that service even in winter months can only bring dislocation in its wake.

Cessation of night boat service from Victoria to Vancouver permanently, and also elimination of the Victoria-Port Angeles route by the CPR are heavy blows in themselves. No combination of remaining routes, including air traffic, can take the place of these long-established ferry services, especially on the triangle route. Interference with the winter tourist season, quite apart from the convenience of Victoria residents, may blow back on the Canadian Pacific Railway itself in connection with the Empress Hotel.

In view of the long established connection between the company and Victoria, the valuable land grant initially comprising one-third of Vancouver Island, and a growing population of 250,000 on the Island, this seems a very sudden shift in CPR policy to the disadvantage of the largest city on it. Representations should be made to the CPR for reconsideration of the winter suspension on the triangle route and the elimination of two single routes before any other arrangements can be made to fill the gap.

Unrealistic Exemption

A SOCIAL Credit member of the legislature has urged the government to raise the exemption from sales tax on meals eaten in restaurants to $1.50. It is a reasonable request, and the only flaw in it is that it is too reasonable. The government should take the tax off meals altogether or, if not prepared to go that far, should at least double the present exemption.

This tax on meals is inconsistent, unrealistic and a source of annoyance to the visitors British Columbia is trying so hard to please. It is inconsistent because it pretends that food served in public places is essential to a lesser degree than food eaten at home which is not taxed. It isn't even consistent with the principle that the sales tax is a levy on goods and materials only and not on service. A shoe repairer, for example, collects sales tax for the government only on the leather used, disregarding his own work; but a restaurant has to reckon tax on the total bill for a meal when in some instances the materials may represent only a small part of it.

The meal tax is unreasonable because it essays to establish meals over $1 eaten in public places as a luxury. This in the case of the great majority of patrons of restaurants and lunch counters is sheer nonsense. The kind of lunch which most city workers buy downtown because it takes too long to go home could scarcely be rated in the luxury class. The figure fixed for exemption also has become unreasonable. Originally it was 50 cents, and it is now several years since the present government raised it to $1. Since then the value of a dollar in terms of most restaurant meals has shrunk out of recognition.

The nuisance element is perhaps less important, but it exists nonetheless and is resented most by tourists. Travellers have an intense dislike of taxes added to the price of their purchases and a tax on meals irks them more than any other. That sort of tax policy gives a country a bad name.

Second-Class Citizens

IT must be very difficult to know when one is violating an "unstated" rule. Apparently civil servants are supposed to read the minds of their superiors, even though 2,000 miles away, as well as have no personal opinions of their own.

It was because he broke this "unstated" rule, the federal mines minister revealed in the Commons, that Mr. Edward Argyle of the local observatory staff was reprimanded for expressing an adverse opinion about the U.S. Atlas satellite. Only his good record as a civil servant, also, saved him from more drastic treatment.

This case has been a sorry spectacle. If the federal government was "embarrassed"—the official explanation—by Mr. Argyle's remarks then it is very easily embarrassed. By its attitude also it embarrasses its own projected Bill of Rights, which supposedly is designed to protect the very personal freedom exercised by Mr. Argyle, by nullifying it in advance.

That bill will mean little if it proscribes civil servants from opening their mouths on any matter which, apparently, even though unconnected with their own oath of office, their Ottawa superiors do not like. While serving the state, it seems, they are to be second-class citizens, denied the ordinary spoken privileges of other persons.

The mines minister was asked by a CCF member to define the exact limits of the "prudence and reticence" to be followed by public servants. The minister did not reply. It is no wonder. The government's position in this matter has been indefensible.

Interpreting the News

Blockade Is Pointless

By ED SIMON
Canadian Press Staff Writer

ON the face of it, the Russians could scarcely have picked a less propitious time to interfere with traffic between West Berlin and West Germany.

Their sudden insistence on the right to inspect the interior of open-ended army trucks, already exposed to view, appeared to be a point so trivial as to be hardly worth arguing about, particularly at a time when there is a growing sentiment in the West in favor of greater efforts toward a German settlement.

It was generally accepted that State Secretary Dulles had German problems high on his agenda when he left Washington for his tour of Western European capitals. There were strong rumors—since confirmed — that Prime Minister Macmillan would visit Moscow to take up the subject with Premier Khrushchev.

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If the Russians really want an agreement on German's future, the memory of their blockade of Berlin 10 years ago is the image least likely to produce a compromising frame of mind in their Western treaty partners.

Yet twice in recent weeks Khrushchev appears to have gone out of his way to unite the West in opposition to his professed desire for German negotiations. Before Christmas, he issued his virtual ultimatum on demilitarization of West Berlin. Then he picked a quarrel over the city's supply convoys.

While there is little solid evidence to back the rumors that the West is planning substantial changes in its German policy, there has been increased pressure in Britain and the United States for renewed negotiations, however inconclusive.

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Macmillan has frequently declared his willingness to attend a new summit conference. With a general election approaching, his government's popularity would be enhanced by any indication that it is willing to play its part in relaxing international tension.

Dulles, for his part, has already been subjected to preliminary prodding by the heavily Democratic Congress.

"We have to consider the—uh—National Security"

They're on Top Now

Coddling The Unions

(From The Saturday Evening Post)

IT is time for a new look at the implications of two supposedly fundamental "civil rights" for labor unions: the "right to strike" and the "right to organize."

Apparently the right to strike is taken to mean that a modern industrial country can be denied air transport, its daily newspapers and the use of ocean-transport facilities while unions and management bicker over wage contracts.

Despite the existence of machinery to settle labor disputes, the community is expected to endure whatever privations are imposed by the cessation of the struck industry. Picket lines must not be crossed, even when the picket line is set up by racketeers to intimidate workers into joining a shakedown union. The late Calvin Coolidge's dictum that nobody has a right to strike against the public safety is seldom mentioned.

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The "right to organize" blazed into the news in a big way recently when one of James Hoffa's henchmen declared that the Teamsters' Union was thinking of organizing New York City's police force. Cynics might say that, inasmuch as the police in most cities are not permitted to protect a struck industrial plant or the right of individuals to work in it, Hoffa might as well have the police force and be done with it. After all, if the "right to organize" includes the right to boycott an employer because he deals with a firm on the union's black list, there exists the basis for a labor dictatorship including the police.

We are a tolerant people and tend to take a sentimental attitude toward the activities of labor leaders, who are no longer helpless and persecuted toilers but big operators. They control millions of dollars for which they need make no real accounting, and, by virtue of laws enacted by Congress over the years, they enjoy immunity from responsibilities which are expected of other citizens. Violence in labor disputes has been sanctioned by the courts; unions may adopt monopolistic practices with impunity; they cannot be held to their own agreements.

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The "right to strike," which was recognized in the Wagner Act, and is still assured in the Taft-Hartley Law, grew out of the days when workers had very few rights and when there was little machinery for the settlement of labor disputes. Today, when scores of agencies are available, there is no reason why the public should tolerate the shutting down of essential industries during the bargaining. It is time that the "right to read a morning newspaper" or the "right to ride on a plane" or the "right to turn on the electric lights" got some legal recognition.

The "right to organize," which has been perverted to include the right to compel men to join labor organizations against their will and to force employers to herd their employees into dubious unions, needs a new look too. Perhaps even those new members of Congress who think they owe their election to union leaders can be persuaded under public pressure to deal with the subject objectively and not as the agents of an aggressive special interest. But the pressure will have to be tough and intelligently applied.

Gerald Waring

Reports from Ottawa

TRADE Minister Churchill replied with what seemed like feigned innocence to a comment by Liberal leader Pearson the other day. The comment was that one of the minister's top aides, a man appointed by the minister, was friendly towards the government.

Were there, inquired Churchill, any deputy ministers who were not?

Pearson didn't answer, but it is a matter of record that some Conservative MPs have denounced top officials inherited from the Liberal regime as being hostile towards the new masters. A number of these officials have left the government service, and at least some of them undoubtedly resigned as the easy and graceful solution to situations of increasing awkwardness. In executive ranks the maxim is, get out before you're kicked out.

Among those who have left the government service are CBC chairman A. D. Dunton, Deputy Trade Minister Mitchell Sharp, Atomic Energy president William Bennett, Assistant Deputy Finance Minister A. K. Eaton, Polymer Corp. president J. D. Barrington and Seaway president Claude Lessard.

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At least three of them were "C. D. Howe men"—a label which distinctly is not a recommendation in the public service today. Dave Golden, deputy minister of defence production, also rates this tag. His departure is expected soon.

Considerable finesse is being employed to persuade Golden to leave. On the one hand, little strategems are being used to undermine his desire to stay. For example, Production Minister O'Hurley is dealing directly with division heads, bypassing Golden. On the other hand the Conservatives are canvassing their friends in private industry, seeking a company that will make Golden an offer good enough to entice him away from Ottawa.

These are facts. But they do not necessarily mean that the government is wrong in ousting Golden or any other high official. Ministers must be served by officials on whom they can rely, and on whose sympathetic assistance they can count. If old loyalties make officials antagonistic or uncooperative, the public welfare demands that they go. But the operative word is "if."

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In the case of Queen's Printer Edmond Cloutier the government showed that it desires to avoid the stigma of political firings. After influential Conservative MPs had thoroughly damned Cloutier during the Commons inquiry into construction of the new printing bureau, the government offered to waive the compulsory retirement age rule if Cloutier would stay on. But by then Cloutier's position was untenable anyway.

Most observers agree that if the government could rid itself gracefully of Bank of Canada governor James E. Coyne and National Gallery director Alan Jarvis, it would do so. Both these officials have been involved in public controversies with the government. But both have unexpired employment contracts on which the government presumably would have to make good if it fired them. Neither shows any sign of wanting to quit.

Another head which may roll if the government can arrange it with finesse is that of CNR president Donald Gordon. There have been rumblings of Tory dissaatisfaction with Gordon—and his $75,000 a year job is a plum that any government would like to have in its gift.

The Packsack

Of GREGORY CLARK

SOME months ago The Packsack noted that beaver were being live-trapped down in the southern agricultural regions of Ontario, where they are a bit of a problem, and shipped by air to Big Trout Lake a thousand miles north, where they are liberated to repopulate an area in which the beaver have died out. To the Crees of Big Trout Lake the beaver is as basic as are livestock, grains and vegetables to our agricultural economy.

In the farthest south tip of Ontario, known as the banana belt, a hang-down region that is actually on the same latitude as the northern end of the State of California, they have a provincial park that has become over-run with deer. So overpopulated is the park that the deer are making regeneration of the forest impossible, and of course are doomed themselves to starvation within a matter of three or four years. So the foresters have been instructed to shoot back the herd to proportions in keeping with the capacity of the park to support them. It is going on now.

The carcasses are gralloched, frozen, shipped by express to Sioux Lookout, where they are picked up in the big forestry planes and flown to—guess where? Big Trout Lake, more than a thousand miles from the park.

The Crees are refraining from trapping the beaver until they get established.

Meanwhile, they must eat. And by this curious and thoughtful process, all within the perimeter of one government department, the problems of the wilderness and of wild nature are being solved by technologists.

Fun, Fact and Fiction

A long-suffering diner noted that his coffee had been served without a spoon.

"This coffee," he remarked, "is going to be pretty hot to stir with my finger."

A little later the waiter returned to the table with another cup of coffee.

"Try this one, sir," he said. "It's a bit cooler."

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Wonderful science has developed a way to take all the bones out of a turkey, but for old times' sake each boneless frozen bird will come equipped, no doubt, with a little plastic wishbone.

Official But Human

Britain From Within

By ERNEST THOMSON, from London

TO the interested observer, the world in general is a sort of strip cartoon. The characters come and go, but as we watch, the main effect is "a continuing picture of the pattern of life"—the phrase used so aptly to introduce "Britain: An Official Handbook, 1959."

Less than a twelvemonth, it seems, since the postman tried, in vain, to wedge the 1958 edition through my letter box. Now, along comes its successor, the tenth in its line, running to 538 pages and still the most human official handbook I know.

Unlike a strip cartoon, "Britain" can be tapped at any point, forwards or backwards, without waiting for tomorrow's instalment. From "ZETA," the latest in controlled thermonuclear reactors, you can flick the pages back in time to the ancient Iron Age Britons; or pinpoint the comings and goings of the modern housewife as she roams the supermarkets.

Or you can follow the activities of the 35,000 overseas students now in the United Kingdom or the weekend pastimes of the home-grown citizens. Or discover why this small country, 75th in size among the countries on this earth, ranks second in world trade and provides about a fifth of the world's exports of manufactured goods. Or visit the sports stadiums, the "pubs" and departmental stores, the churches and dance halls, factories and shipyards, and see life as it is lived all the year round at the heart of the Commonwealth.

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Are we in the United Kingdom too busy getting and spending to take a look at ourselves? It would seem so. "Britain" had run through six editions before it appeared on our own bookstalls four years ago. Until then it was only available overseas, the mainstay of the British Information Services in many countries.

The idea was apparently current that citizens in the Mother Country took all the good things in their stride, armed with an encyclopaedic knowledge embracing everything from the workings of Parliamentary democracy and the duties of a police constable, to the amount of whisky exported annually to Canada and the tonnage of our merchant navy, the largest active mercantile fleet in the world.

To pick the gems from among 538 pages is no easy task. Statisticians will discover joy on almost every other page. The recent splendid improvement in Britain's balance of payments, the 30 per cent real increase in gross national output in the past ten years, the limiting of unemployment in that time to less than 2 per cent—these facts, along with the rise in exports from £1,142,000,000 in 1947 to £3,325,000,000 in 1957—dazzle the layman with astronomical figures that leave him groping for others more down to earth that he can touch and handle.

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One of the most striking disclosures, not forgetting vast road development and engineering schemes going forward in the United Kingdom, is the amount of construction work British engineers are carrying out overseas. About 62 firms were engaged in hydro-electric schemes in Uganda and Turkey, big harbor works in India and Ghana, power stations in the union of South Africa and New Zealand, home and industrial estate development in Canada, the Auckland harbor bridge in New Zealand, and large-scale irrigation works in India, Pakistan, Egypt and Greece.

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To come back home, here is a medley of facts to delight any quizmaster. How many children and young people attend Britain's schools, universities and technical colleges? Answer: nearly 9,000,000. The number of qualified scientists and engineers is in excess of 142,000, and in the next 10 to 15 years the annual output of newly-trained ones should rise to 20,000.

Nuclear power for peaceful purposes: with Calder Hall having led the world as the first commercial-scale nuclear power station, Britain plans to provide 22 per cent of total electricity power consumption by a chain of stations to be completed in 1966-67.

Air transport: in 1958 Britain inaugurated the first trans-Atlantic jet air service with the Comet IV.

How many houses in the United Kingdom? Nearly 16,000,000. The average house with three bedrooms costs £1,486 to build. At a post office counter the citizen can draw his pension, buy a licence for his gun, dog, radio or television receiving set, renew his car licence and buy national insurance as well as postage stamps.

The facts are there for the choosing, plus 47 photographs ranging from the London Fire Brigade at a real fire, to the Dounreay nuclear energy establishment and a scene in a typical English village street.